



Neal Chromy, manager, and Lee Meyer, executive director of Fremont Opera House, are shown inside the downstairs room where musical performances, plays and other events take place. This space also is rented out for wedding receptions and other gatherings.

month and we're going to do those again. They were very popular before COVID," she said.

The opera house also offers a facility members of the public can rent for activities such as birthday parties, wedding receptions and other occasions.

"We've already started booking rentals, so we're real excited about that, too," Meyer said.

Meyer believes people can benefit by visiting the historic building and enjoy affordable entertainment.

"We try to keep our entertainment at a nominal price so anybody can come see it," Meyer said.

The Digg Site

In 2009, Fremonter Stacy Heatherly founded the Digg Site, a nonprofit organization that focuses on educating youth on all processes of filmmaking.

She then started the Eastern Nebraska Film Office in Fremont to provide students a way to gain practical experience.

Heatherly worked with City of Fremont leadership to create the only officially prepared film incentive program that exists in Nebraska. Getting the film incentive program passed by the city council was a key turning point that made it possible to bring several film productions to Fremont.

"We've had interns and students on every film that's come," she said.

Heatherly said Fremont has a

rich entertainment history.

"From what I understand, there were several theaters at one time and it was a big entertainment hub for a really long time," Heatherly said.

'The Fremont Gang Comedy'

The Empress Theater was built in 1915.

Fremont Daily Tribune articles tell how in 1939, Bill Mack, manager of the Empress, hired Hollywood film director Melton Barker to film a comedy. Barker went from town to town, making basically the same film.

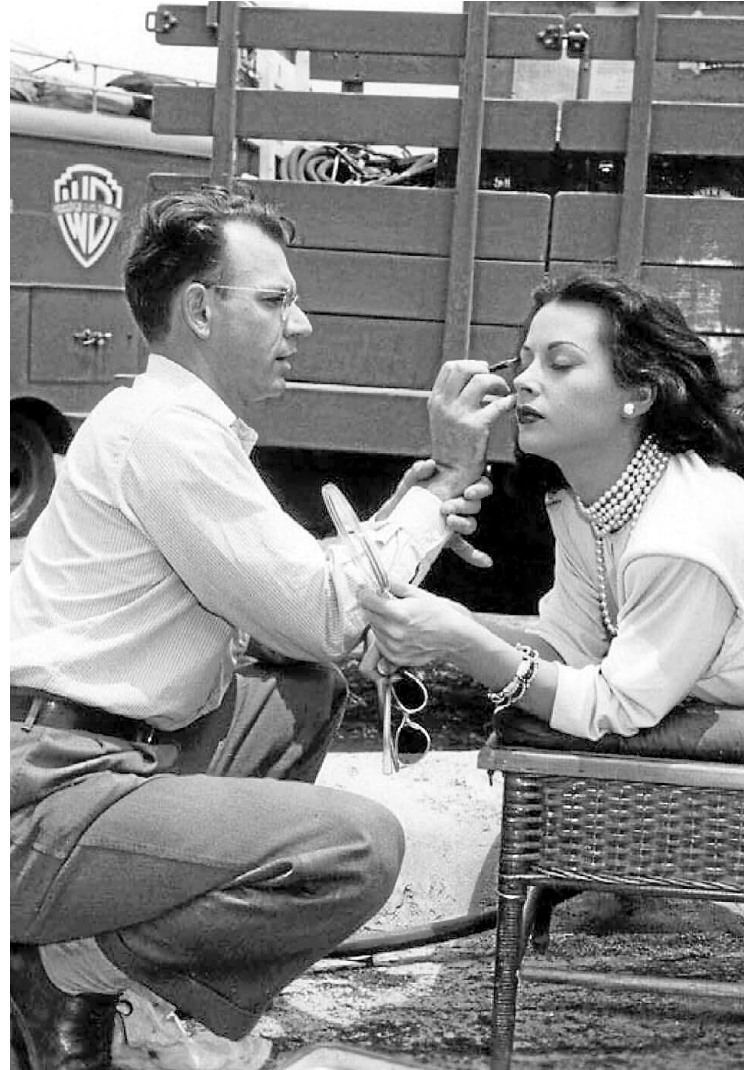
As with other towns, a casting call went out for kids and the film was shot locally. The film called, "The Fremont Gang Comedy," featured 130 children, ages 3 to 12. This film, which depicts a little boy defeating some kidnapers, premiered on Dec. 9, 1939, at the Empress.

It received good reviews.

Benjamin Nye

Fremont also is the birthplace of Benjamin Emmet Nye, Sr., born Jan. 12, 1907. Nye was an American makeup artist for the Hollywood film industry from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Nye worked on more than 500 films for 20th Century Fox, including "Gone with the Wind," "Miracle on 34th Street," "Gentlemen Prefer Blondes," "The King and I" and "Planet of the Apes." He started the Ben Nye Makeup Company in 1967. Nye was 79 when he died Jan. 9, 1986.



COURTESY PHOTO

Benjamin Nye applies makeup on set in Hollywood. Nye worked as a makeup artist for more than 500 films including "Gone with the Wind."

Actor Robert Taylor

Fremont also was one of the towns where Hollywood actor Robert Taylor lived during his early life. Born Spangler Arlington Brugh, he later went to California where Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer changed his name.



Taylor

One of the most popular leading men of his time, Taylor starred in many films, including: "Magnificent Obsession," "A Yank at Oxford," "Waterloo Bridge," and "Bataan." A chain smoker, Taylor was 57 when he died of lung cancer in 1969.

Actress Marg Helgenberger

Born in Fremont in 1958, actress Marg Helgenberger grew up

in North Bend. She is perhaps best known for her TV role as a crime scene investigator on "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation." Before that, she won an Emmy for her portrayal as a prostitute in the TV series China Beach in 1988. On the silver screen, she portrays a chemical exposure victim in the movie "Erin Brockovich" starring Julia Roberts.

'Slipping Into Darkness'

In 1987, the movie "Slipping Into Darkness," (the original title was "Born to Lose") was filmed in Fremont. Filming locations included: the stairwell of the Dodge County Courthouse, Ridge Cemetery, Louis E. May Museum and the Turner House. One of the co-producers, Don Schain, went on to produce the "High School Musical" series for the Disney Channel. Schain died in 2015 at age 74.